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Provisions for Development of Leadership in Gifted Children in the Elementary School

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PROVISIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP
IN GIFTED CHILDREN IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Eastern Illinois State College

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Purpose of the Study	1
II. What is a Gifted Child	3
General Characteristics of Gifted Children	3
Intellectual Superiority	3
Creativity and Performance	7
Subjective Evaluation of Gifted Children	9
Intellectual Ability	9
Physical Development	11
Social and Emotional Development	12
Objective Evaluation of Gifted Children	14
III. Special Provisions for Gifted Children	18
Enrichment	18
Acceleration	22
Special Classes	25
Individualized Instruction	27
Extra-class Activities	29
Cases of Provisions for Gifted Children	31
Bibliography	

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A basic objective in our educational system has long been to develop the abilities of children so that they may become happy, healthy, and useful citizens in a complex society. In order that this may be successfully accomplished it is helpful to provide, as nearly as possible, equal opportunity for all children.

The problem in this paper is two-fold:- namely, to determine how gifted children are identified as such and to find out what is being done in the elementary school to encourage the appearance of leadership qualities in the development of the gifted child.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Since the instructional programs of the public schools are in the main adapted to the needs of the average child, and since remedial materials of some nature and degree are frequently planned for the slow learner in many elementary schools, it would seem reasonable that the gifted group also should be given special attention and consideration.

The purpose of this study is to review the literature for information on what teachers and administrators are doing to identify and develop to the optimum the leadership quali-

ities of gifted children in the elementary school.

In accord with the purpose in this study the writer will attempt to review the literature in the educational field since 1950 to determine what has been done to give talented children adequate opportunities for the optimum development of their leadership qualities.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS A GIFTED CHILD?

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED CHILDREN

INTELLECTUAL SUPERIORITY

Intelligence or mental ability as measured by standardized tests is the major factor in selecting gifted children for study groups or special classes. Scheifele in defining a gifted child gives genius, superior, brilliant and the like as general terms used in professional circles and among laymen. "All imply outstanding ability with the emphasis on intellectual superiority. This concept might be attributable to the fact that the most intensive and best known studies of gifted children - those conducted by Lewis M. Terman of Stanford University and Leta S. Hollingsworth of Teachers College, Columbia University - utilized mental superiority as the primary criterion for the selection of subjects in their experimental classes".¹

L. Greenberg² in trying to identify gifted children showed that 15.7 per cent of the children as named by six thousand teachers qualified as gifted using as a basis the

1. Scheifele, Marian, The Gifted Child in the Regular Classroom, New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1953, p 1

2. Greenberg, L., "Critique of Classic Methods of Identifying Gifted Children", School Review, 63:25-30, January 1953

child's I.Q. and the teacher's judgement with the I.Q. being the most important determining factor.

Sumption and others agree that the I.Q. is a good measure of giftedness. They state in the 49th yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education that "Watching for a period of years hundreds of boys and girls being given opportunities commensurate with their predicted intelligence has led us to believe that the standardized individual intelligence test is the best single means available for prediction".¹

The question of where giftedness begins on an intellectual scale is most debatable. An arbitrary I.Q. must be taken. As was stated by Scheifele - "The standard for inclusion in Terman's group was 140 I.Q. as measured by the Stanford-Binet Test of Intelligence"² and the minimum requirement in Leta Hollingsworth's classes for gifted children was an I.Q. of 130 along with other qualities.

Dr. Nathan Kravetz³ of Los Angeles in questioning 30 teachers about gifted children's needs used 135 I.Q. as the minimum requirement for classification as gifted.

1. Sumption, Merle R., and others, The Education of the Exceptional Child, 49th Yearbook, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950, p 262

2. Scheifele, Marian, op. cit., p 1

3. Kravetz, Dr. Nathan, "Gifted Children's Needs", Science News Letter, 66:134, August 28, 1954

In the Cleveland Major-work Classes¹ program planned to care for the needs of the gifted individual the minimum I.Q. for entrance in the classes was an I.Q. of 125.

Attempts have been made to classify school children in accordance with the I.Q. derived from scores received on a test of general intelligence. Test scores for many types of school children are distributed roughly according to a normal probability surface. The majority of the population will fall in an intelligence quotient interval 90 - 110. Typical distributions of intelligence test scores indicate that fewer cases appear as the scores become higher. "At I.Q. 125 and above, we find approximately 3% of our children and only 1% reach or exceed an I.Q. of 130".² In recognition of the nature of the distribution of intelligence scores, various attempts have been made to classify children into groupings on the basis of the I.Q.

The Educational Policies Commission mentions that "Some authorities would prefer to use the term 'gifted' to designate only those whose measured I.Q. exceed 170. Such cases occur with a frequency of only 3 in 10,000. It is

1. Norris, Dorothy E., "Tailor Made For High I.Q.'s", N.E.A. Journal, 42:276-7, May, 1953

2. Pintner, R., Intelligence Testing, H. Holt and Company, New York, 1931, 555 p

more common to use I.Q. 140 as the dividing line that separates the gifted from the general population, following the practice of Professor Lewis Terman. Only six-tenths of 1 per cent of the population have I.Q.'s of 140 or above; that is, one person out of 167. In contrast with such highly selective designation is the custom of some school staffs to classify every pupil with an I.Q. in excess of 112 or 115 as gifted".¹

¹ Educational Policies Commission, Education of The Gifted, National Education Association of the U.S., Washington, D.C., 1950, p 42-3

CREATIVITY AND PERFORMANCE

In addition to having a high intelligence some educators believe that to be a gifted child there must be other qualifications among which is a creative ability or sense of originality. Scheifele believes superiority in special talents in science, arts and the like is best manifested in outstanding performance. Performance alone is not sufficient evidence of giftedness. "Creativity, or originality, is the distinguishing characteristic of the work and behavior of the truly gifted", according to Dr. Scheifele. From these findings she defines giftedness as: "Outstanding creative ability in any one or more of a number of areas of human achievement".¹

In the identification of gifted children Sumption et al, say: "Gifted in the broadest sense includes both those who have high intelligence and those who have special abilities or talents in creative fields such as art, and music."²

Intellectual giftedness does not necessarily become so obvious in many children. Frequently some children are able to show only certain abilities with many others suppressed until challenges cause them to develop. Witty believes the selection on the basis of intelligence is not accurate in

1. Scheifele, Marian, op. cit., p 2

2. Sumption, Merle R. and others, op. cit., p 261-2

itself for he states, "Moreover, there are children whose abilities in art, music or writing, though rare and distinctive, can be recognized only by performance. Perhaps it is desirable to broaden our definition and to consider any child as potentially 'gifted' whose performance in a valuable line of human activity is consistently remarkable".¹

Mr. Witty further states in another article that he believes a child is gifted "when his performance in a worthwhile type of human endeavor is consistently remarkable. Worth-while performance was interpreted to include expression in areas such as music, art, creative writing, mechanical ability, and social leadership, as well as in the area of abstract intelligence".²

Performance of gifted children tends to be superior in the areas of special interests. These interests may be initiated by some school subject that caught the fancy or fired the imagination of the student. Gifted children often show the capacity to create or develop in ways which can be described as exceptional in the light of what is normally expected of children of like age and cultural background.

1. Witty, Paul, "The Gifted Child", The Nation's Schools February, 1956, p 67

2. Witty Paul, "How To Identify The Gifted", Childhood Education, 29:312-16, March, 1953

SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION OF GIFTED CHILDREN

INTELLECTUAL ABILITY

Frequently, intellectually gifted children appear to possess an educational knowledge in excess of the average for the grade in which they are working. Martens states, "He has gleaned an extraordinary breadth of knowledge here, there and everywhere - in casual reading, through incidental contacts and in daily observation."¹

Witty reports these characteristics belonging to the gifted. "The following are some of the indications of outstanding ability in young children: Precocity in using words and sentences, extreme rapidity in learning and remembering, great sensitivity to various things in the immediate environment, interest in books, ability to tell a story and reproduce accurately a number of incidents or events, unusual imagination and resourcefulness, power of sustained attention, and versatility of interest."²

Witty further states in his comments in "How To Identify the Gifted", "In all his school work, the gifted pupil tends to excel, and typically he is modest and well adjusted socially, nevertheless, his general educational growth

1. Martens, E. H., "Gifted Children: What Do We Know About Them? What Shall We Do About Them?", Nation's Schools, 47:31-4, June, 1951

2. Witty, P.A., "Gifted Children, Our Nations Greatest Resource", Today's Health, 30:18-20, December, 1952

progresses at such a rapid rate that in the upper elementary school he has knowledges and acquisitions which surpass those of children classified two or three grades above him".¹

Many gifted children show much interest in school and are eager for new learning situations. Parnham reports on the results of the findings of a committee in Madison, Wisconsin Public Schools. Conclusions reached by the committee making the study are as follows: "These mentally gifted pupils possess a strong desire to learn, are avid readers, participate extensively in varied activities, are generally well-adjusted socially and emotionally, possess rich backgrounds of experiences and are influenced by excellent home environments."²

Hill divides the intellectual ability into a number of abilities and interests in this manner: "He is that highly intelligent youngster who is capable of doing superior work in a fraction of the time his classmates require for doing the same work in an average fashion. In general, he is alert, curious and interested. He is likely to have an incredible memory....., reads swiftly and avidly. He has a wide general knowledge....., He thinks abstractly,

1. Witty, P. A., "How To Identify The Gifted", Childhood Education, 29:312-16, March, 1953

2. Parnham, M., "Mentally Gifted, Nation's Schools, 52:42-4, August, 1953

is good at problem-solving..... He is inventive, and possesses imagination and initiative and has an outstanding vocabulary".¹

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Gifted children generally tend to be physically more developed than those children of the same age. As low as kindergarten and the first grades the tendency is for gifted children to be active. In play they have better coordination and are able to succeed more times in childhood games. In art, physical education, science or other classes employing small group activities the children who were selected as leaders and succeeded in play are generally selected as leaders on the basis of the earlier success. Gifted children often talk loudly to command attention of those in authority, during intermissions, game selection, project selection or other periods of time which allow them freedom of movement. Some will resort to pushing others aside in an effort to be in a better position for recognition. Success in these activities stimulates a stronger desire in the children for more recognition.

Witty supports the view that gifted children are physically superior to average children of the same age,"The

I. Hill, M., "Teacher, the Parent and the Gifted Child", Grade Teacher, 71:32, May, 1954

gifted child is shown to be physically superior, attractive and well-rounded - not the physical weakling and social misfit that is so often pictured".¹

Hill says, "Actually he tends to be larger and healthier than classmates of his own age. He enjoys games and athletics. Contrary to popular notion he is not a sissy, studious type; he isn't physically frail."²

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Gifted children have a high level of social and emotional development. Until approximately 1920 it was generally believed that gifted children were eccentric or emotionally unstable. Bright children were sometimes shunned. In school they hesitated to reveal their abilities. Genetic studies reveal the falsity of these opinions. In some instances the gifted children's educational growth progresses at a more rapid rate than their social growth. The children then tend to shun group activities. Very often they are sound thinkers and are able to concentrate their abilities on games and parties and the like without expressions of superiority or egotism. With the ability to talk fluently they are generally the leaders of groups either by the group selection or by forcing themselves into prominent

1. Witty, Paul, op. cit., p 19

2. Hill, M., op. cit., p 32

positions. The ill-tempered, mischievous child who earns low school marks and who expresses himself by a desire to monopolize attention by his continual talking, may be the gifted child without sufficient recognition.

The emotional responses of the gifted child are influenced by the environment in the home and the actions of his parents. If the parents resort to forcing development of the abilities of their gifted child to favorably impress their own social group, the gifted child may not be accepted by his own group. He can become an egotist and a bully. As a result of his misbehavior often the child is avoided by his fellows and becomes isolated from participation in group activity. The effect is to induce a further concentration on reading or other intellectual efforts.

Martens says, "Intellectually gifted children show on the average a high level of physical development, health and mental and social adjustment. The findings of the Stanford studies of about 1,500 children of 135 I.Q.(and above) and the results of other research projects involving lesser numbers leave no doubt in this matter."¹

¹ I. Martens, E. H., op. cit., p 33

OBJECTIVE EVALUATION

Individuals vary considerably in their innate ability to acquire, arrange and use facts. Most schools use the intelligence test of mental ability to measure how well the individual uses the ability. The test score is a numerical appraisal of the mental abilities requiring exercise of intelligence in the performance of a task. The test score alone is not sufficient to determine the endowment of the child. Other factors are to be considered in conjunction with the I.Q., namely, the child's previous experience, the person giving the test, the child's cooperation during the test, home life, physical condition at the time of the test and many others. In studying test results for placement the reviewer must realize that he does not have all conditions at hand. In the usual case, he has very little information in respect to the child's creativeness, initiative, curiosity or imagination.

Mentally gifted children excel to a high degree in their ability to do abstract thinking. Also, mentally gifted children are likely to respond to test items with greater speed. Most intelligence tests have time limits. The time limits of a good test instrument have been tried out to establish optimum testing time. In this way time is adapted to the ability of the person under testing.

Teacher's judgment of a child's ability is sometimes used as a factor in determining who is gifted. In the educational system the teacher generally determines the accomplishment or achievement which the child has made in his school work through observation of daily work and by administering teacher made tests covering material studied. The instructional test score assigned represents the teacher's judgement of the achievement. Surveys comparing results of standardized achievement tests with the marks assigned by the teacher prove the teacher's judgement to be very inaccurate. There is the possibility of a teacher being in the presence of a child, gifted in some capacity, and not aware of the fact.

Children gifted in some special ability are not readily identified with a general intelligence test. They may have unusual talent and ability in art, music, mechanics or language. Aptitude tests in art have been devised to test the aptitude for the appreciation or production of art, or readiness for learning in the field of visual art.¹ Another art test requires the examinee to evaluate one hundred pairs of pictures in such a way as to test his grasp of artistic principles.

1. Graves, Maitland, Graves Design Judgment Test, Psychological Corporation, New York

2. Meier, Norman C., Meier Art Test -- Part I: Art Judgment, Psychological Corporation, New York

The Seashore Measure of Musical Talents¹ seeks to identify music ability in a child. This test measures six aspects of auditory discrimination: pitch, loudness, time, timbre, rhythm and tonal memory.

Other tests are available to measure mechanical relationships and manipulative skills in mechanical ability testing.² In science and other fields tests are obtainable to measure special abilities. The relationship between general intelligence and special abilities as shown by correlation coefficients tends to be low. Therefore, a general mental test is a poor measure to identify the child who has certain special talents. Psychologists do not all agree on the relationship of general intelligence to special ability but do agree that the aptitude test does help to identify the gifted child.

Witty agrees that there is a question on the relationship of intelligence and aptitude tests by stating: "Children who are gifted in the sense that they possess, to a high degree, some special ability, are not so readily identified by tests of general intelligence. Their special gifts may lie in one or more such areas as art, music, drama, mechanics, or language ability.

1. Seashore, Carl E., "Seashore Measures of Musical Talent", Psychological Corporation, New York, 1956, p 18

2. Psychological Corporation, Test Division Catalog, New York, 1956, p 6-21

There is still a great deal of controversy among psychologists as to the nature of special abilities and their relation to general intelligence. There is not only disagreement as to whether 'aptitudes' exist, but as to what their exact limits are and as to whether they are innate or acquired.

So far as identifying gifted children is concerned, there is, at present, a tendency to use such aptitude tests as are available in order to cast some light at least on the nature of the abilities of the gifted. The value of these tests depends upon the background and training of those who¹ interpret them".

Ruch believes there is practically no correlation between general intelligence and aptitude in art, music or mechanical ability by stating: "Artistic ability, like musical ability is independent of general intelligence (Meier, 1942). There have not been enough studies in this area to answer the question of whether there is all-around artistic ability. For none of these abilities- artistic, athletic, mechanical or musical- have there been definite studies on the relative roles of heredity and environment, such as have been carried out regarding intelligence".²

1. Witty, Paul, op. cit., p 15

2. Ruch, Floyd L., Psychology and Life, Fourth Edition, Scott Foresman and Company, Chicago, 1953

CHAPTER III

SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR THE GIFTED CHILD

ENRICHMENT

Many educators are profoundly affected by a realization of the fact that giftedness is a particular capacity of an individual that should be extended and enriched. They recognize within individual giftedness lies a quality of potential leadership of value to society. In order to develop this leadership ability to the optimum degree special attention must be given by teachers in schools to ways and means whereby those with the most ability will be given an opportunity to have their ability challenged. The present educational system with its large enrollments has a strong tendency to overemphasize the needs of slow and retarded children. As a result our teachers have insufficient time for special attention to the needs of the gifted.

Therefore, it is evident increased attention must be given in schools to develop the abilities of gifted pupils. Before a program to provide for the needs of gifted children is devised and instituted some definition of the basic objectives of such a program is essential. One such program worthy of description that has defined its objectives is the Major Work Classes of Cleveland.¹ The objectives in this

1. Witty, Paul, op. cit., p 15

program are:

1. Increasing the range of knowledge and skills of the students
2. Developing initiative and creative power
3. Developing alertness
4. Developing an attitude of critical thinking
5. Developing power to work independently, to plan, to execute, and to judge
6. Developing increased ability to share in undertakings
7. Developing leadership

The Cleveland plan of operation of classes for gifted children will be discussed later in this paper.

A survey of the literature reveals there are certain common practices in use whose major purpose is the provision for developing to the optimum the total abilities of gifted children. Examples of such practices are: special classes, enrichment, acceleration, individualized instruction, and use of extra-class activities. In developing abilities of a gifted child the objective is to develop all the abilities of the child as much as possible. By so doing the gifted child should develop into a well informed child in several areas, and at the same time acquire leadership abilities as well as responsibilities. Leadership is not taught as an end in itself as might be an outcome in a social studies class but comes as a concomitant of growth of the entire educational

experience.

When the term 'enrichment' is used in this paper, it refers to the instructional method, worthwhile activities and experiences employed to provide opportunities for optimum development of leadership qualities in gifted children. Schools that use an extensive enrichment program as the means to produce the greatest development of a child's responsibility seem to favor heterogeneous grouping, but do provide for gifted children through use of individual or group projects to extend learning. In the assignments of the projects the teacher gives the child only those specific directions which she thinks necessary to assure her that they know what is generally expected in the assignment. The mastery of the assignment challenges initiative, critical thinking, and ability to engage not only in group activities but in activities independently. In some instances it may not be apparent to all or any of the children why certain ones should be required to do more work than their classmates. After the teacher satisfactorily explains the facts of individual differences and the need that each one do his best the gifted children accept enrichment as a challenge and an opportunity to enrich not only their experiences - but the experiences of others. At the same time the average and slow learners come to understand the necessity of doing minimum

assignments before additional responsibilities can be assumed.

In a report issued by the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation of Teachers College, Columbia University several suggestions were made whereby the education of the gifted child may be improved. In this report teachers are advised to "keep talented youth in regular classrooms but enrich instruction for them with individual or group projects in subjects that especially interest them or in which they show unusual skill and ability".¹

Mathews states as a fundamental basis for developing understanding and responsibility as follows: "You want to provide opportunity for personality growth, improved leadership, working with others, more sharing of problems and a sympathetic approach to the needs of others".²

Enrichment as a provision for more fully developing responsibility and leadership qualities in gifted children proves to be the most universally used. Few examples are given of concrete illustrations applied in the classrooms. The judgment of the teachers and administrators must suffice as the guide. Enrichment proves to be fine in theory, difficult in application, but successful when practiced.

1. Glubok, Norman, editor, "Enriching Education For Gifted Children", Nation's Schools, November, 1955, p 52

2. Mathews, E., "Fast Learners Need Special Attention, Too", Instructor, 62:98, September, 1952

ACCELERATION

Acceleration or grade skipping is the easiest solution to the need to make at least partial provision for the optimum development of leadership abilities in gifted children. The practice of acceleration confronts the child with a learning situation where greater intellectual demands will be made upon the natural abilities. If acceleration is to be practiced, it is important that exceptional talent be identified at the earliest possible time so special attention to special needs of this type of child may come early.

There is no definite evidence to show at what grade acceleration is most feasible. Acceleration in any grade causes a gap in some fundamental knowledges and skills acquired in school. Someone should be held responsible for bridging this gap. Some schools place the responsibility for this extra effort jointly, upon the accelerating and the receiving teacher.

Witty subscribes to this belief by stating: "Another handicap resulting from acceleration is the child's loss of certain fundamental knowledge and skills as the child 'skips' through the grades. In his subsequent education he may never encounter the basic content he has missed. And because of his dislike of routine, the gifted child rarely takes time, on his own initiative, to master such material"¹.

1. Witty, Paul, op. cit., p 52

Terman and Oden state: "In these days when tests of intelligence and school achievement are so easily available, one might suppose that nearly all of the gifted would be identified at an early age. Such is not the case. Even where tests are used their results are so frequently mininterpreted. One reason why early identification is important is that acceleration is most feasible in lower grades. Another is that the earlier the gifted child is identified the better his later education can be planned for".¹

Acceleration is beneficial to those gifted children who will continue their school work in institutions of higher education. The number of years of study required for a professional degree are reduced with a saving of both time and money. The Educational Policies Commission makes this comment: "Acceleration, also, enables the gifted individual to assume many adult responsibilities at an earlier age than would be necessary if he were to spend the usual number of years in completing his education. Time so saved can be of benefit to society as well as to the individual involved, for it means that his span of productive years is increased and the cost of his education is reduced."²

1. Terman, L. M. and Oden, Melita, "Major Issues in Educating Gifted Children", Educational Digest, 20:30-1, December, 1954

2. Educational Policies Commission, op. cit., p 50

Careful consideration and study must be given to individual cases before the conclusion is reached that acceleration is the best means to employ to care for the education of the gifted child. It is possible that very harmful effects could result. All phases of the child's development must be considered in making an acceleration instead of basing the decision solely upon intellectual ability as measured by the mental test. Personality inventories or aptitude tests are not available for the primary grades. If an acceleration is contemplated for a child in the primary grades, it is necessary to determine the stage of the child's development. Since a primary child's attendance at school is of short duration, there is little time or opportunity for display of special talent. Much insight can grow out of additional information secured through a conference with the parents. Unless the child is extremely precocious for his age in respect to the emotional, social, intellectual and physical development acceleration should not be employed. The Educational Policies Commission continues: "In spite of these general advantages, there is danger that too rapid promotion will cause or aggravate social and emotional maladjustment for the child whose rate of social and emotional maturation are markedly slower than his rate of intellectual growth. In such cases the damage

that may be done to the child's personality is too high a price to pay for the advantages that may accrue to his intellectual development - especially if comparable advantages can be gained by other means".¹

Chapman gives further evidence that administrators should question the advisability of acceleration by stating: "Amidst the economy and simplicity of acceleration are hidden some rather acute relevant and subtle disadvantages. Only a certain amount of rationalization would prevent us from realizing that grade skipping is an indirect attempt to adjust the child to the system. Perhaps, too, the child is entitled to a more logical, sustained, planned curriculum than that offered by skipping. In weighing the advantages and disadvantages we must also give considerable attention to such things as social adjustment, emotional maturity and physical size".²

SPECIAL CLASSES

Segregation, special classes and homogeneous grouping are the various names for the same method used for bringing optimum development of abilities to gifted children. All refer to the placement of pupils with similar abilities in

1. Educational Policies Commission, op. cit., p 50

2. Chapman, Guy, The Gifted Child in the Elementary Classroom, Twenty-sixth Yearbook, California, Capital Printing, Sacramento, 1953, p 21

a classroom together. Around the use of this plan there is likely to be considerable controversy.

Certain advantages and disadvantages said to accrue to the pupils through the use of such plans are listed by Heck¹ in "The Education of Exceptional Children". He mentions them as follows:

The advantages are:

1. The child works at the level of his superior ability
2. The child does not become careless
3. The class provides opportunity to adapt instruction to the needs of the child
4. The child can proceed normally through the grades
5. It prevents social maladjustment
6. The child must exert himself to make good
7. The child receives definite training for leadership
8. It permits methods adapted to unique abilities

The disadvantages are:

1. Pupils become conceited
2. It is undemocratic
3. It creates an intellectual aristocracy
4. It results in jealousy from the average child

¹ I. Heck, W. A. O., The Education of Exceptional Children McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1953; 513 pages; p 387

5. It causes gifted to overwork
6. Fewer leaders develop
7. Average children lose educationally
8. Selection for classes is inadequate
9. The cost is prohibitive

If special classes are employed as the method of developing gifted abilities, special consideration will be given to: basing activities on the needs of the children, minimizing the emphasis on drill, maintaining high standards of achievement, providing participation of gifted children with average children at least part of the time.

Whether or not special classes are employed in a system is dependent in a large measure on:

1. The availability of qualified teachers
2. Finances of the school system
3. Viewpoints or beliefs of administration and teachers
4. Attitude of parents and community
5. Availability of classrooms

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

Increase in class size because of larger school enrollments places a premium upon teacher time in the elementary school. This factor interferes with the use of individualized instruction as a method of providing for gifted children. Ordinarily, only a very few children in the class are in the

gifted group. The teacher always is confronted with the need to make a choice. Either there must be the extra effort spent in individualized instruction or extra effort is needed to cope with the problem child which the gifted child may become unless his abilities are channelled into worthwhile guided activities.

Few direct references are made in the literature as to how individualized instruction is employed. In order for teachers to know each child as an individual, there must be some changes made in the present operation of the school system. To do worthwhile teaching under a plan of individualized instruction, classes must be small in size. The teacher is in a better position to be able to learn the attitudes, feelings, homelife, likes and dislikes of the child and thereby will be able better to formulate proper plans of instruction to meet individual needs.

The Educational Policies Commission makes this statement about our classroom arrangement, "To make individualization of instruction more possible and more fully effective - for the gifted as well as for all others - will require substantial change in prevailing practices with respect to class size. In excessively large classes the teacher learns to know each pupil as an individual only with great difficulty. It would also help to have each teacher spend a longer period

of time with the same pupils than is customary at present".¹

Whenever members of a school staff converse about the problems of the education of the gifted and the teachers are asked by an administrator to state what each one is doing for the gifted children, the usual answer is: "Where do I have the time?" Teachers recognize that they have an obligation to provide learning situations for all children to develop their abilities to the optimum. Perhaps teachers are giving more individual attention to children than is realized.

EXTRA-CLASS ACTIVITIES

The use of extra-class activities in schools proves to be a good means for the development of leadership and responsibility. Among these activities the most often employed in schools are: participation in athletics, the school paper, student council, student safety patrol, band and the various clubs.

Children who have an opportunity to participate in the extra-class activities program in most instances are children who are gifted in certain respects to a certain degree. Frequently schools have the policy of requiring a pupil to complete the regular classroom assignment before he is permitted to engage in other activities. In effect, a sense of responsibility for work well done develops in the

1. Educational Policies Commission, op.cit., p 47

minds of the children.

One educator mentions the term, "Guidance is teaching"; one might add that supervision is guidance. Since extra-class activities frequently provide opportunities for children to assume a degree of initiative in their actions and behavior, proper supervision must be administered. Participation in extra-class activities generally necessitate the absence of the pupil from the regular classroom and from supervision of the teacher since it is impractical to attempt the promotion of all activities in one room. Materials for different activities are found in various locations in the building. Those participating must be free to go wherever necessary to accomplish the work at hand. It is during this time that an occasional check by the teacher proves valuable. Members engaged in these activities prefer that they be released from strict supervision. If they are allowed to work without the presence of the supervisor, they learn that as long as they are performing in a manner expected of them they will be allowed the necessary individual freedom which is so vital to developing responsibility and leadership. The possibility of habits of wasting time and loafing is always present when freedom is allowed.

CASES OF PROVISIONS FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

The gifted children testing in the top 1 per cent in ability in the University City, Missouri Schools¹ did not have enough hard work to do in school to stimulate their best efforts, so the schools set out to establish an environment program.

In 1954, 275 pupils in grades two through six were enrolled in 30 different classes. Full time of two teachers and half time of one were used directing these classes in the eight elementary schools.

The pupils met with their enrichment teacher in groups of eight or ten for periods from forty to fifty minutes in length, twice each week, during school time. They studied topics of their own choosing so far as feasible and with the advice of the teacher. The areas studied were of a very broad field such as: "Great Composers", "Literature", "St. Louis Industry", "Nature Study", and "The Science of Weather Prediction".

In these study units, reading, discussions, and oral and written reports were supplemented by field trips whereby the pupils gained from first hand observations. Models, maps, charts and graphs were made and used in the presentation of

¹. Warren, Julius E. and Dunlap, James M., "The Gifted And The Educationally Retarded", Nation's Schools, June, 1954, p 51

their project study. The original plan was to study three or four units per year, but the children preferred to continue further the study of a single unit. This desire to continue demonstrated their developed power of concentrated study and also their serious interest in the program.

In addition to the unit study, provision was made for discussion of current events and happenings taken from periodicals and newspapers. Further allowance was made for creative writing, study of human relations, examination of games, popular magazines, puzzles and the like. Typing was introduced to illustrate communication but not as a study skill.

Each year all the groups of the 6th grade enrichment students contribute their accomplishment to the camp program of all sixth grade pupils for one week each spring. They displayed weather stations, soil erosion, aluminum signs identifying plants and trees of the area and also an accumulation of thought questions for hikes.

The results were gratifying with only four or five failing to show considerable benefit. Remarks from pupils, principals, teachers and parents were evidence of the value. Statistical evidence showed that gifted children are motivated by enriched activities to make better use of their abilities. The evidence further showed that pupils from enriched classes received higher marks than were received by pupils

in the comparable control group.

In Los Angeles in 1950-51, a Committee was appointed to set up a plan to provide for rapid learners an opportunity to attend enrichment classes. After detailed study they agreed that any plan for setting up special classes for rapid learners entailed serious disadvantages. Therefore, it was agreed that enrichment in the regular program was the approach which should get the primary emphasis.

The main features of the organization for the actual¹ classes were:

1. A reserve teacher was assigned to the project
2. Groups of twelve to fifteen pupils met one morning each week with the teacher
3. Selection was based on the following criteria:
 - a. regular grade placement- 4, 5 or 6
 - b. I. Q. 130 or above
 - c. high achievement test score
 - d. enrollment in a school near the school with enrichment room
 - e. approval of principal and regular teacher
 - f. consent of the parents
 - g. interest shown by the individual

In these classes the specially trained teacher used

¹ I. Anderson, Donald, editor, The Gifted Child in the Elementary School, California Elementary School Administrator's Association, Capital Printing, Sacramento, 1953, p 42-3

her own initiative but followed certain predetermined requirements listed below:

1. No work in advance of child's own grade level except on child's initiative
2. No duplication of classroom work
3. Pupils encouraged to develop varied interests
4. Development of good study and work habits
5. Follow individual interests
6. Develop oral and written communication skills
7. Develop logical thinking
8. Develop research ability
9. Develop realization of responsibilities

A study of one of the class periods reveals a great variety, although they were all classified as gifted.

A Tuesday Class Group

8 boys 6 girls

I.Q. 130 - 155 average 142

C.A. 9-4 to 11-4 average 10-6

Reading Grade Placement 6-2 to 11 plus average 9-4

Regular Grade Placement 3 in 5th grade

11 in 6th grade

Most teachers prefer concrete examples of enrichment in a regular classroom instead of generalizations. An example of enrichment in a spelling class in San Diego¹ should

¹. Anderson, Donald, editor, op. cit., p 82

serve as an illustration.

At the beginning of the year the teacher-consultant suggested that children who were able to do the week's work in two days instead of five should do so. Five gifted children were given the privilege.

On Monday they worked with their whole group when new words were presented. On Friday they took the final test with the group. They used their free time to work on individual spelling lists made from words which proved troublesome in their other classes. They were allowed to work on word games, puzzles, words common to trades and professions, and figures of speech. Some of the work came from adult magazines and some were devised by the by the teacher. The five gifted children shared their finished work with the entire group once each week in a language class. The teacher made observations of the children's progress.

The program had not been in operation sufficient time to tabulate data for comparison. One result was the increased word interest reflected by both the gifted and the other members of the class.

Hunter College Elementary School¹, a laboratory school for gifted children between the ages of three and eleven years chose enrichment instead of the acceleration to provide

1. Witty, Paul, op. cit., p 188-9

for development of their gifted children's abilities. Each teacher's program provides one free day every week. On this day excursions are taken. Parents cooperate in taking the children to factories, printing shops, and newspaper offices.

The Hunter College plan was instituted to develop a cooperative plan whereby parents could assume responsibilities for assisting teachers in providing opportunities of enrichment for gifted children. This plan provided the gifted children with unusual learning experiences beyond those which could be provided by the school alone.

L. V. Mc Namee¹ of La Marque, Texas, presents a program of enrichment which is applicable to a small school system. In two of the elementary schools the rapid learners of the fifth and sixth grades are excused from classes for one period three days a week. In this period the rapid learners are given suitable instruction in biology, science, public speaking, current events, and other appropriate topics. They are taken on field trips to newspaper offices and other important facilities.

From 15 to 20 pupils make up each of the two classes. They are selected on the basis of reading ability, intelligence scores, teacher judgement, and scholastic records. The scholarship angle is played down because some children with

¹L. Mc Namee, L. V., "Enriching Education of Rapid Learners", Nation's Schools, December, 1955, p 70-2

rare ability have not done equally well in school work yet they deserve to be in the group. Children with an I.Q. of 115 or above and who are two years advanced in reading ability do well in the class.

In addition to two enrichment classes they are encouraging enrichment in the regular classroom by differentiated assignments, high standards of achievement, experimentation, special projects, opportunities for leadership, varied reading materials, assistants in instruction, small group and individual research, and use of unit method of teaching.

Many of the people who are currently publicizing their plans of enrichment for gifted children have not been operating their plan for sufficient time to ascertain definite data for true merits of the plan. However, parents, teachers, administrators, and the gifted children generally approve the plan as being sound and workable.

In Cleveland,¹ Ohio, in 1953 approximately 1,600 pupils were in 42 major-work classes for enrichment at elementary, junior high school, and senior high school levels.

A child is given a mental ability test which is administered at the beginning of each semester. Because the child makes a high score on the mental ability test the psychologist is called upon to administer further tests. If the

1. Norris, D. E., op. cit., p 276-7

results of these tests are high, the principal, teacher and psychologist hold a conference in which the participants discuss the child's social and emotional adjustment. If these people agree that the child is well-enough adjusted socially and emotionally they suggest that the child be placed in a major-work class. The supervisor of the major-work class confers with the child's parents at which time a complete explanation is given them regarding the implications involved in transferring from one class to the major-work class. If the parents give their consent to the transfer, the child is entered in the school nearest its home for enrichment classes.

During play periods all the bright children must attend with the remainder of the grade from which they were taken. They participate in rhythm band and other regular school activities.

Each child has his own project of his interest and also has a part and responsibility in a group project. Each child is responsible for collecting his own materials and budgeting his time. Since he finishes in less time, more detailed projects suited to his age and interests may be assigned. At the same time the work does not encroach on the work of the next higher grade.

Opportunity for social and personal adjustment is offered. Frequently, children are entered in these classes

without the proper preparation for effective group work. The fact that the child has doting parents may have the effect of causing him to become self satisfied and boastful about his ability in the presence of the child. An opportunity for competition with children with nearly equal abilities tend to place the quality of individual performance in proper perspective. By the end of the school year a truer understanding and appreciation of the abilities of others takes place.

The writer has attempted to show that the education of gifted children poses a serious problem for the schools. Educators are aware of the problem. They are assiduously occupied in the formulation of plans which will insure a better education of gifted children.

Educators and members of the technical professions are cognizant of the great need for increased attention to the identification of talent, the training of talented individuals to the end that a tremendous waste of human resources may be allayed. Talent of gifted children should be used to benefit society. In order to get the greatest good from the exercise of talent, it becomes the obligation of administrators, teachers, and parents to provide the greatest opportunity possible for the full development of the abilities of children.

Present day society needs all the leadership which can be provided. Unless this leadership quality is discovered early, the fullest development is not possible and society loses through the wasting of human resources.

Most educators realize that much is to be done to improve the educational facilities for gifted children. They need exceptional teachers and exceptional materials in the presentation of exceptional methods of teaching. By and large, the typical teacher makes inadequate provision for maximum growth of the gifted child in the class.

The school should be made a place of equal opportunity for all children, not a place of identical exposure to learning for all children.

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